

GROW OUR

GREEN SPACES

Your practical guide for creating a colourful, low-maintenance, wildlife friendly garden in the City of Canada Bay.











Why are green spaces so important	4
Planning your native garden	6
Where to start	7
Attracting wildlife	10
How to plant	12
If you don't have a garden?	14
What plants do I choose for my habitat garden?	16
Get involved	24
Other resources	25





Why are green spaces so important?

Green spaces are areas of vegetation that enrich surroundings by supporting ecosystems and adding natural beauty. Green spaces are more than just pretty patches of plants — they're nature's secret superheroes. They boost biodiversity, cut through urban heat, filter the air we breathe, and give our minds room to breathe too. They're essential, energising and alive with purpose.





This guide is to help you bring more natural greenery and biodiversity to your garden, while creating a safe, welcoming space for native wildlife to feed and shelter — and for you to enjoy! Use the plant guide as a starting point to choose the right trees, shrubs and ground covers for your space and support your local ecosystem.

If you would like some advice about your plans, please don't hesitate to contact Council on 9911 6555.

Note: This guide is not designed to guide the revegetation of natural areas and bushland. Planting in bushland and natural areas should be guided by Council's Bushcare team.



Planning your native garden

There are many native plant species that can help you create a colourful and vibrant garden that is resilient and great for local wildlife. Before doing anything, decide whether you want a bush garden, low-growing wildlfower garden, or something more structured.

Whatever you decide, a native garden will help you...





- Save money and time native plants are low maintenance and need less water and fertiliser than exotic plants. Replacing lawn with native grasses also means less time mowing!
- Cool your surroundings a reduction in hard surfaces and an increase in plants and trees in your garden will help cool your home on hot days!
- Bring colourful native birds, butterflies and stingless bees to your home native wildlife prefer native plants, simple! Lots of local wildlife such as the superb fairy wren and the eastern blue-tongue lizard live on the urban fringe. By planting a native garden, you are extending their habitat and providing them with a 'stepping stone' to move between larger patches of bushland. With the right variety of native plants, you can expect to attract a variety of native bees and insects.

Where to start

It's important to plan the design of your garden before you start planting and adding new materials. When planning your garden, here are a few things to consider:

Tip: Improving soil conditions

- Clay soils mix through compost and add gypsum to break down the clay. Aerate the soil with a garden fork and raise it by about 30cm.
- Sandy soils mix through organic matter and keep well mulched.

Step 1: Understand the conditions of your space

- Sun and shade take note of which areas get the most exposure to sunlight and the areas that are shaded.
- Moisture levels ground moisture levels are usually influenced by the type of soil, the presence of slopes or dips that collect water during wet seasons, and how close the soil is to a natural water source.
- Soil type knowing your soil type will ensure your plants thrive. Clay soils are usually sticky when wet, form large clumps and are harder to dig. Sandy soils are grittier, easier to dig through and drain quickly. Silt soils are in-between clay and sandy soils, and may contain small pebbles and rocks.

Not sure of your garden's soil type? Follow these steps...

- 1. Pick up a handful of soil and remove sticks and stones.
- 2. Squish it together to form a ball.

Results:



Soil stayed together = clay soil



Soil stayed together while I applied pressure only = silt/loamy soil



Soil broke apart = sandy soil



Step 2: Assess the space

Use steps or a tape measure to roughly measure the dimensions of your garden, then draw up a plan. Try leaving space for pebbled paths, clumped rocks, bird baths or even a small frog pond.

Step 3: Work with what you have

You don't have to remove all your existing plants and trees to create a thriving habitat garden, even if they are exotic. Other than adding native plants, habitat features can also be added to complement your space nicely.

Tip: Add a bird bath or pond

Try sheltering a small bird bath inside a shrub or bush, or creating a small pond using the following tips:

- 1. Gather materials. Purchase either a prefabricated frog pond or a roll of black plastic. You'll also need sand or gravel, native pond plants, edging plants and rocks to weigh down the edges and offer animals access in and out of the pond.
- **2. Prepare a hole.** Dig out the hole and either line with the black plastic or prefab pond, then place the bed of sand or gravel on the bottom.
- **3. Create surroundings.** Place rocks, logs and your edging plants around the pond. Choose native reeds and ferns, available at any plant nursery.
- **4. Fill it in.** Add water and pond plants. If you're using tap water, let it sit in the sun for a week to allow substances harmful to wildlife to dissipate.
- **5. Make it safe.** Installing a cover, such as wire mesh, over a frog pond can help reduce the risk of any injury for households with small children and pets

Mulching

Mulching is an effective way to reduce weeds and retain moisture in soils whilst improving the appearance of any garden. For newly planted natives, mulching will simulate growing conditions in bushland where leaf litter forms a natural layer that encourages microorganism activity. When mulching, remember to leave a 2cm gap around the stems or trunks as piling mulch against stems may cause a fungal infection or rotting.

Fertiliser

Most native plants thrive without fertiliser as they have adapted to survive local conditions. Adding fertiliser may sometimes harm the plants by burning the roots or making them weak. However, regular mulching and applying seaweed solution to your plants every two months can be beneficial to improve soil structure and can have significant stimulatory effects on plant growth.

Pruning

Pruning is essential as it controls pests and diseases, and stimulates new growth, making your plant lush and bushy. Prune up to a third of the plant after it has finished flowering to maximise its growth. Start by nipping the tops of the shoots. The more you prune the more compact and dense the plant will get.

Watering

Plants that have just been planted require frequent watering as they establish in the ground. Aim to water heavily once a week to encourage stronger root growth and to build drought tolerance. Do this for 6-8 weeks and once the plants are established watering can be less frequent.

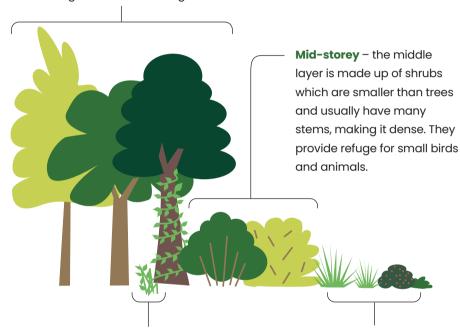


Attracting wildlife

A good native garden will often attract a variety of birds, insects, reptiles and maybe even frogs. You can encourage wildlife to take refuge in your garden by planting native plants that provide shelter and food throughout the year. Aim to create different vegetation layers for shade and shelter. Adding new plants from time to time will help to increase diversity.



Canopy – the top layer is made up of tall trees and large shrubs with a single trunk.



Under-storey or groundcover – these are low growing plants that spread at soil level, climbers or grasses. They help reduce erosion, reduce weed growth and act as living mulch for larger shrubs.









Creating living spaces

Birds – to attract small native birds into your garden, plant a variety of dense native shrubs with prickly foliage that provide different types of food (seeds, fruits, nectar and insects). Dense spiky shrubs provide a refuge for small birds from predators. Providing a water source like a bird bath near the shrubs will encourage birds to visit your garden, especially in summer months.

Bees, butterflies and
beneficial insects – insects
play an essential role in
pollination, control pest
population in your garden
and are a source of food for
other fauna. Installing an
insect hotel helps attract
native pollinators such
as the blue banded bee.
To attract insects, plant a
variety of species as food
sources, keep leaf litter for
insects to live in and don't
use pesticides.

Reptiles – debris like leaf litter, bark, hollow logs and rocks are great shelters for lizards. They need basking points such as paving or rocky walls at a sunny spot in your garden that is also close to shrubs that they can crawl into when danger is present. They rely on ground cover and small shrubs to forage for food.

Mammals – adding a nesting box to your garden will provide mammals like possums and sugar gliders with a home away from your roof. Large trees (Eucalyptus species) and shrubs (Grevilleas and Bottlebrushes) provide a great food source for native mammals.

How to plant

Native plants often take a while to settle after being planted. To make sure they get a great start follow these 5 easy steps:





Step 1: Digging the hole

Dig a hole roughly be twice as deep and twice as wide as the container your plant comes in. Loosen the wall of soil around the edge of the hole if it's too compact. This will allow the roots to spread, push through and grow.



Step 2: Water the seedling

Water the seedling well before removing it from the container it comes in. This will make it easier to get the plant out as a whole. An easy way to do this is to soak the container (without submerging the leaves) into a bucket of water for a couple of minutes.





Step 3: Removing the seedling

For small to medium pots, release the plant from the container by holding it upside down. Tap or squeeze the bottom gently to release it while holding the soil in place. Do not try to pull plants by their leaves or stems as this may harm the plant. To release larger plants, tilt the pot, tap the bottom and gently ease out the plant whilst holding on to the base of the stem for support.

If the roots are twisted tightly around the soil, gently loosen them up as natives are sensitive to root disturbance.



Step 4: Planting

Place the seedling in the hole then push soil back into the hole around it, making sure all gaps are covered. Push down firmly on the soil, water the plant and spread mulch around the plant, making sure to leave a 2cm gap from the stem or trunk to avoid rotting or fungal growth. If possible, use aged mulch to avoid losing nitrogen from the soil.



Step 5: Watering

Newly planted seedlings need to be soaked with water. Another good soaking with the addition of seaweed solution encourages the roots to become stronger by growing deeper and reduces evaporation.

After planting, water the seedling once a week for six to eight weeks.

If planting in pots or in hot windy conditions, please water more often. Even though most native plants can tolerate dry conditions, newly planted seedlings should be watered well while they are establishing.

If you don't have a garden...

Balcony Biodiversity

Make the most of your small space

If you only have balcony or a small outdoor space, why not go vertical with a green wall? Adding a green wall is as easy as placing trailing vines and scramblers in vertical pots and trellises. Most hardware suppliers sell green wall garden kits, then it's as easy as filling them with potting mix and plants. You can decide if you want to add decorative pots, play with color schemes, or use plant stands that work well in smaller spaces.





For potted plants, it's a good idea to use pots with drainage holes to avoid overwatering. Keep in mind that not all seedlings from the nursery need to be repotted right away. Just make sure you know what kind of soil, water and light your plant needs.

A helpful tip: you can keep your plant in the nursery pot it came in and simply place it inside a decorative pot.





Other tips

Make use of features like insect hotels, small nest boxes and flowering pot plants, which can hang or be attached to a wall to provide food and habitat for important insects. Make sure to plant dwarf native varieties in pots instead of exotic plants. You can buy insect hotels from hardware stores or learn to make your own using the resources at the back of this brochure.

What plants do I choose for my habitat garden?

Conditions in every backyard are different so make sure you choose plants that are suitable for your soil type and location.

On the following pages is a list of recommended native trees, shrubs, ground coverings and grasses that are recommended for the local area.

Where to get native plants?

If you're lucky, you can pick up free native plants at one of Council's plant giveaways. There are annual giveaways corresponding with National Tree Day at the end of July and other smaller plant giveaways at events throughout the year. Check Council's website for upcoming events. If you miss out on a giveaway, please contact Council to check for leftover plants, otherwise seedlings from plant nurseries are usually under \$5.

Key



Spring

Summer

Autumn

Winter



Any soil



Sand



Clay



Dry, well drained soil



Bees



Sun



Partly shaded



Seed eating birds

Nectar eating birds



Shaded



Butterflies

Other insects



Suitable for pots



Lizards



Frogs



Mammals



Caterpillars





Trees

Plant name	Physical features	Flowering time	Attracts wildlife	Size (metres)	Position	Soil type	Other attributes
Dwarf Apple Angophora hispida	A small spreading evergreen tree with cream nectar rich flowers, rarely grows taller than 4m		\$82	Height: 4-7m Width: 3-5m			Low maintenance
Grey Myrtle Backhousia myrtifolia	A small evergreen tree with cream coloured flowers and cinnamon scented foliage		\$00	Height: 3-7m Width: 2-5m		•	Will tolerate most soils but likes it deep; foliage can be used for cooking in place of cinnamon
Old Man Banksia Banksia serrata	A medium sized tree with leathery serrated leaves and creamy to brown large flowers	9 😚	968	Height: 3-15m Width: 2-4m			Low maintenance
Coast Banksia Banksia integrifolia	A slow growing tree with leathery dark green leaves and nectar rich yellow flowers	?**	988	Height: 4-15m Width: 1-6m			Low maintenance garden; faster growing than other Banksia species



Trees

Plant name	Physical features	Flowering time	Attracts wildlife	Size (metres)	Position	Soil type	Other attributes
Rough-barked apple Angophora floribunda	Medium shade tree with a dense canopy and spectacular floral display		\$32	Height: 15- 30m Width: 10-15m			Low maintenance tree, flowers great for attracting biodiversity
Smooth-barked apple Angophora costata	Pink to pale grey, sometimes rusty- stained bark that sheds in spring, produces white flowers in summer		692	Height: 10- 20m Width: 10-15m			Low maintenance, can grow almost anywhere
Cheese tree Glochidion ferdinandi	Small to medium shade tree with cheese-shaped fruits and yellowy- green flowers	***	68	Height: 3-15m Width: 2-4m	•		Provides deep shade. Requires regular watering in hot weather to establish
Lilly Pilly Syzygium smithii	Fast-growing shade tree with white flowers and pink berries. Can be pruned to keep as a hedge or small tree	•	900	Height: 1-10m (depending on variety) Width: 3-5m			Popular cultivated tree with many varieties. New growth is an attractive pink colour



Shrubs

Plant name	Physical features	Flowering time	Attracts wildlife	Size (metres)	Position	Soil Type	Other attributes
Gossamer Wattle Acacia floribunda	Fast growing evergreen shrub with abundant pale cream flowers	© +		Height: 4-6m Width: 2-3m			Useful for controlling erosion and often used as a hedge or wind breaker
Sydney Golden Wattle Acacia longifolia	An upright and spreading evergreen shrub with golden yellow flowers	0 +		Height: 4-8m Width: 2-3m			Low maintenance, often used as a hedge or screen
White/Flax Wattle Acacia linifolia	A perennial shrub with fine leaves and cream flowers		4000	Height: 2-5m Width: 2-4m			Fast growing shrub that requires regular watering; bird nesting plant
Hop Bush Dodonea triquetra	Small fast-growing shrub with bird- attracting flowers and seeds and glossy green foliage	**	086	Height: <1- 3m			Grows happily underneath trees. Yellow-green floral display is followed by papery seeds, loved by native parrots
Silver Banksia Banksia marginata	An evergreen broad domed shrub featuring large yellow flowers and green leaves with silver undersides	**	6920	Height: 1-2m Width: 1-2m			Suitable for low hedges and forms a good rounded shape; pruning will result in a denser shrub
Honey Pots Banksia spinulosa	Dense and compact shrub with golden flowers	\$	\$208	Height: < 1m Width: < 1m			Low maintenance and can be easily pruned to smaller sizes
River Rose Baurea rubioides	A low growing plant with pink flowers and can be easily grown in pots	♀ ※	6 8	Height: < 1.5m Width: < 1m	00		Grows best in shady spots; needs moist soil
Native Rose Boronia serrulata	Delicate and fragrant deep pink flowers.	?	000	Height: 1m Width: 1m			Entire plant is fragrant.
White correa Correa alba	Evergreen shrub with white flowers.	**	36	Height: 1.5m Width: 1.5m Width: 3m			Low maintenace flowering plant.
Coastal Rosemary Westringia fruticosa	White flowers with foliage ranging from blue-green to grey-green.	? **	486	Height: 1.5m to 3m Width: 3m			Height: 1.5m to 3m Width: 3m

Shrubs

Plant name	Physical features	Flowering time	Attracts wildlife	Size (metres)	Position	Soil Type	Other attributes
Coffee Bush Breynia oblongifolia	Evergreen erect shrub with small green pendulous flowers and pink fruit	***	8 \$ 00	Height: < 2.5m Width: < 2m			Prefers well composted soil; frost and drought tolerant
Sweet Bursaria Bursaria spinosa	A hardy shrub with small sweetly perfumed, white flowers	⇔	8 40 8	Height: 1-4m Width: 1-3m			Low maintenance and fast growing; grows well in well drained soil; great shelter for small birds
Native Fuschia Correa reflexa	A hardy shrub that produces pink, red or yellow flowers through the year	***	8 \$ 26	Height: < 1.2m Width: < 1m			Low maintenance and tolerates extended dry periods once established
Eggs and Bacon Dillwynia retorta	Commonly found pea flowers with yellow and red flowers	0	844	Height: 1-3m Width: 1-3m			Prefers a light well drained soil in an open sunny position
Silky Grevillea Grevillea sericea	Easy care medium sized shrub with spider shaped pink flowers	? **	4	Height: 1-2m Width: 1-2m			Low maintenance and responds well to regular pruning
Silky Hakea Hakea sericea	Large shrub that produces fragrant flowers well in winter	*	90	Height: 1-5m Width: 1-3m			Dense and fast-growing with spiky foliage, great for small bird habitat and as a useful deterrent (leaves are spiky when brushed against)

Shrubs

Plant name	Physical features	Flowering time	Attracts wildlife	Size (metres)	Position	Soil Type	Other attributes
Australian Indigo Indigofera australis	An ornamental shrub with pink to purple blooms	9	486	Height: 1-2m Width: 1-2m			Leaves and stems can be used as natural yellow dye
Tick Bush Kunzea ambigua	Medium shrub with bundles of white, sweet-smelling flowers. Note that Kunzea has no association with ticks	?	\$86	Height: 1-5m Width: 1-3m			Good for screening, informal hedging and low maintenance areas; responds well to pruning. Flowers have pleasant honey smell
Copper Glow Tea Tree Leptospermum polygalifolium	A hardy plant with arching branches clothed in copper coloured foliage and white flowers	*	\$86	Height: 2-3m Width: 2-3m		₩	Suited for informal hedging and screening, as well as a contrast shrub for other plantings
Honey Myrtle Melaleuca thymifolia	A dense mounded shrub with small leaves and clusters of attractive and intricate purple flowers	? **	\$86	Height: 1-2m Width: 1-2m			A low growing hedge that requires little maintenance; great for shrubberies or as a pot
Thyme Honeymyrtle Pultenaea microphylla	Shrub with tiny narrow leaves and pretty yellow and red pea-type flowers	***	983	Height: 1-2m Width: < 1m			Frost tolerant plant that prefers well drained soil
Wild Yellow Jasmine Pittosporum revolutum	Small fast growing shrub with yellow flowers and yellow seeds	•	89	Height: <1-3m			Leaves are soft and hairy, seeds are bright yellow, attracting birds and native insects

Herbs, Ground Covers and Scramblers

Plant name	Physical features	Flowering time	Attracts wildlife	Size (metres)	Position	Soil Type	Other attributes
Apple Berry Billardiera scandens	Tough and adaptable climber that produces pink and white flowers	? *	8886	Height: <1.5m Width: 1-3m			Suitable for screening, and works well as a dense groundcover for landscape or garden use and can be successfully grown in containers and hanging baskets
Headache Vine Clematis glycinoides	A woody stemmed vine with white flowers	?	086	Height: 2-3m Width: 2-3m		●●8	It will grow as a ground cover where there are no adjacent plants to grow up on
Kidney Weed Dichondra repens	A creeping plant that spreads widely	****	466	Height: <0.3m Width: 1-5m	•		Can be used as a soft lawn alternative which doesn't need mowing, but will not stand up to hard traffic
Love Creeper Glycine clandestina	A fine open twining herb with long stems and flowers all year round	*****	840	Height: <0.3m Width: 1-5m			Attractive light climber for gardens, on fences and logs; very hardy when established, and responds to pruning
Basket Grass Oplismenus aemulus	Creeping and matting grass that can form a thick ground cover in shaded areas	**	400	Height: <0.3m Width: 2-3m	•		Suitable for no mow lawns
White Root Lobelia purpurascens	A small herb with white to pale purple flowers		460	Height: <0.2m Width: <0.5m	•		Useful and hardy groundcover
Native Violet Viola hederacea	Ground cover and lawn substitute with round leaves and purple and white flowers held above the foliage	***	666	Height: <0.2m Width: <1m			Can be used for a lawn substitute if it doesn't get much foot traffic
Angular Pigface Carpobrotus glaucescens	Creeping succulent with pink to purple flowers.	\$	\$806	Length: 2m			Low maintenance and great for stabilising soil.
Yellow Buttons Chrysocephalum apiculatum	Perennial with golden yellow button like flowers.	*****	486	Height: 60cm Width: 1m			Perfect for rockeries, pits and native gardens.
Bulbine Lily Bulbine bulbosa	Perennial with yellow flowers and clumping in a bulb like habit.	900	48	Height: 80cm Width: 50cm			Great daffodil alternative and fragrant.
Wombat Berry Eustrephus latifolius	Fast-growing twining adaptable vine.	P	06	Width: 6m Length: 6m			White or pink flowers also works well as a clumping plant or ground cover.

Grasses

Plant name	Physical features	Flowering time	Attracts wildlife	Size (metres)	Position	Soil Type	Other attributes
Wallaby Grass Rhytidosperma bipartita	Blue-green grass with pale green to white fluffy flowers	\$	•	Height: <0.12m Width: <0.9m			Should be cut back periodically to encourage new growth
Flax Lily Dianella longifolia	A narrow-leafed form of Dianella with yellow and purple flowers	9		Height: <1m Width: <1m			It can be cut back to ground level if the plant gets untidy and will re-shoot from its underground rhizomes
Right Angle Grass Entolasia marginata	Straggling or shrubby wiry rhizomatous perennial	? *	866	Height: <1m Width: <1m			Can grow up to 0.8m tall when freestanding, but may even reach in excess of 2m tall when supported by other plants
Mat Rush Lomandra longifolia	A hardy perennial with scented yellow flowers	? *	\$66	Height: <1m Width: <0.6m			Tolerates dry spells but regular watering will stimulate new growth; can be used as an indoor plant
Tussock Grass Poa affinis	Perennial grass with highly ornamental needle-like blue/grey foliage	90	•	Height: <1 m Width: <0.5m			Ideal for gardens, borders, rockeries; drought and frost tolerant
Kangaroo Grass Themeda australis	Textured foliage with rusty red flower head	?	080	Height: <0.5m Width: <0.6m			Use it as a lawn substitute for small areas where it will not receive excessive foot traffic or as an unusual border plant at the front of a bed
Grass Tree Xanthorrhoea spp.	Slow growing perennial with a tuft of long thin leaves	? *	\$86	Height: 0.2-5 m Width: 1-2m			Requires well drained soil in full sun to lightly dappled shade; in heavier soil it is advisable to build up raised beds for better drainage
Fish Bones Lomandra obliqua	Unique looking ground cover or grass for pots.	P	486	Height: 30cm Width: 60cm			Can be grown as ground cover or upright.
Cut-leaf daisy Brachyscome multifida	Bears white, pink and pale to bright blue "daisy"-type flowers.	\$	8	Height: 20cm Width: 30cm		₩	Great for draping over retaining walls or hanging baskets.

Get involved

There are many dedicated groups that play an important role in helping restore and protect the environment. Please visit Council's website to find out more about the following groups:



Canada Bay Bushcare

Bushcare is a volunteer program that enables community members to participate in the restoration, enhancement and maintenance of natural areas. Visit Council's website to register as a bushcare volunteer.

Love Your Place

A Council supported litter clean-up program that encourages community groups, residents, local businesses and schools to get involved in the preservation and enhancement of the local grea.

To find out more about Council's biodiversity efforts visit canadabay.nsw.gov.au

Participate and Learn

Getting involved in citizen science initiatives offers you the chance to contribute to research projects that can help inform future decision-making. Council works with organisations like Birdlife Australia to encourage residents to get involved in the annual Backyard Birdcount. Visit Council's website for more information.







Other resources

There are many courses, books and online resources about gardening with native plants and creating wildlife friendly gardens. Here are a few useful resources that will help you learn about native plants and gardens for wildlife.



Native planting:

Robinson, Les (2003) Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney, Simon & Schuster, NSW

Stewart, Angus & Bishop, A.B. (2015) The Australian Native Garden: A Practical Guide, Murdoch Books Australia, NSW

Australian Native Plants Society anpsa. org.au

NSW Flora Online

plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au

Sustainable Gardening Australia sgaonline.org.au

Native wildlife habitat:

Bishop, Andrea (2018)
Habitat: A Practical Guide to Creating
a Wildlife-Friendly Australian Garden,
Murdoch Books, NSW

McKee-Orsini, Michele (2018) Handmade Bird, Bee, And Bat Houses: 25 Beautiful Homes, Feeders, And More To Attract Wildlife Into Your Garden, CICO Books, London

Birds in Backyards

birdsinbackyards.net

Habitat Network

habitatnetwork.org

Backyard Buddies

backyardbuddies.org.au

Gardening Australia 'Bee Hotels'

bit.ly/abcbeehotels

Aussie Bee

aussiebee.com.au/ beesinyourarea.html



